

**Before the  
Federal Communications Commission  
Washington, DC 20554**

In the Matter of )  
Implementation of Section 621(a)(1) of )  
The Cable Communications Policy Act ) **MB Docket No. 05-311**  
Of 1984 as Amended by the Cable )  
Television Consumer Protection and )  
Competition Act of 1992 )

**REPLY COMMENTS OF THE WORLD INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The World Institute on Disability (WID) is a nonprofit research, training and public policy center promoting the civil rights and the full societal inclusion of people with disabilities. WID is also a member of the Consumers for Cable Choice (C4CC)<sup>1</sup> alliance of organizations promoting increased competition in the cable television market to enhance choices, reduce prices and spur innovation. WID is pleased to submit Reply Comments to the above-captioned proceeding to reiterate our strong belief that reform of current franchise regulations will promote greater competition in the cable marketplace and lead to increased benefits for all Americans including those with disabilities.

**II. DISCUSSION**

As we stated in our comments, broadband technologies provide enormous benefits to all consumers, particularly people with disabilities. Advanced communications technologies make possible numerous applications from video relay to home healthcare services that greatly enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Such technologies can also provide increased employment and educational opportunities, helping people with disabilities remain independent, productive and valued members of society.

Current barriers to broadband technologies for people with disabilities include availability and affordability. As we have seen in other industries, increased competition in a marketplace typically leads to lower costs and

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<sup>1</sup> Consumers for Cable Choice, Inc. is a not-for-profit corporation formed under Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code.

We believe that streamlining the current franchising process will expedite broadband deployment and the delivery of affordable and accessible technologies to all Americans. We note that some commenters suggest that the FCC does not have the authority to reform the current franchise regulations. We strongly disagree. Like a number of other commenters, including the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD), we believe the FCC does have the legal authority and we urge it exercise that authority and adopt rules interpreting Section 621 of the Telecommunications Act that would increase video competition and promote broadband deployment.

Broadband deployment and franchise relief are intrinsically linked. As we've noted access to advanced telecommunications can significantly enhance the lives of people with disabilities. Therefore, like AAPD and others, we urge the FCC to use its legal and statutory authority to reform the current franchise regulations, promote greater competition in the cable marketplace and expedite the delivery of affordable and accessible broadband technologies to all Americans.

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
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